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SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

SHEILA S. BREITWEISER, Ed.D.
PRESIDENT

October 15, 1998

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Ms. Karen Amos
Office of State Budget
1122 Lady St., 12th floor
Columbia, SC 29201

STATE DOCUMENTS

Dear Ms. Amos:

Enclosed is the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind's (SCSDB) Accountability Report for FY 1997-98. While our report follows the prescribed format and includes the elements as requested, the agency's administration wishes to present information on current initiatives that may not follow the prescribed Accountability Report format, but are important in presenting the efforts of our agency. The purpose of including the current initiatives is to direct attention to the agency's internal strategies which more comprehensively reflect the goals and objectives believed to better achieve accountability, enhance services and fulfill the mission accomplishment.

Several years ago the agency's Board of Commissioners, President and Executive Committee convened a workshop for the purpose of developing a long-range plan. A product of the workshop was development of the mission statement on which the agency's long-range plan was to be based. The agency's long-range plan was developed through surveys and focus groups (Board members, staff, faculty, parents, other agencies and organizations). The plan was completed and approved by the agency's Board of Commissioners in December of 1994. Once the agency's Executive Staff began to implement the long-range plan, it became obvious that the scope and comprehensiveness of the plan was overly ambitious for realistic implementation within the time frames established.

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South Carolina's Resource Center for the Deaf and the Blind

Programs for Preschool, Elementary, High School, Sensory Multidisabled, Vocational, and Postsecondary Students
A Wide Variety of Outreach and Support Services

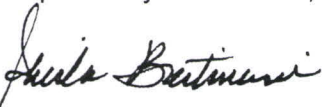
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Within recent years, the agency's long-range plan has been revisited, resulting in eight priorities to be addressed in the current year. Executive Staff members developed related goal statements, objectives, and strategies with input from the respective staff who would be involved in implementation. Simultaneously, a parent survey was conducted in the spring of the 1996-97 school year to determine customer satisfaction of this most important group of SCSDB customers. Of the 350 surveys sent, 102 parents responded (29%). Of the 102 parents who responded, 91% rated the SCSDB "better or much better than other public schools their child could attend." While the survey held many positives, it also indicates where improvements can be made. As a result of the survey, a "leadership training" workshop was held for parents and staff members to discuss teamwork and various problem-solving methods.

An Action Plan, which has been developed from the Parent Survey, incorporates the eight priorities developed by staff. This blending of priorities was facilitated by the fact that the staff and parent priorities were the same ones identified as needing improvement.

If you have questions concerning the information submitted, please call me at (864) 577-7500.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Sheila Breitweiser
President, SCSDB
Enclosures

Executive Summary

For purposes of this report, the school's multi-faceted operations have been reduced into three major programs: Educational Programs, Support and Outreach Services, and Administration. The focus of the Educational Programs is on student achievement and employability upon graduation. The objectives and outcome measures for Support and Outreach Services primarily reflect the improvement in the quality of services being offered to our clients. Administration reports on revenues, human resources, staff training and development, and internal audits. These objectives and outcomes are not to be discounted; however, there were achievements during the 1997-98 year not captured in the report. The following narrative provides highlights for some of the major improvements that occurred at SCSDB during the 1997-98 year not found within the performance measures and outcomes.

As mentioned in the letter of transmittal, a parent survey was conducted as prescribed in the agency's long-range plan. Parents were asked to rate the school on twenty-three different attributes. In most instances, the school had already recognized areas that were in need of attention that were confirmed in the parent survey results. While the primary focus was and continues to be placed on student achievement and employability, there are many, many factors within the campus environment that contribute to student success and parent satisfaction. The comfort and safety of students are foremost considerations in a residential school, as reflected by the parent survey. During the 1997-98 year, organizational changes were made in the areas of Administration, Instructional, and Residential Programs to set into motion the needed improvements as identified by parents and staff.

Major agency projects during the 1997-98 school year included completion of a state-of-the-art telecommunication system that will support administrative needs, as well as bring technology into the classroom, including assistive devices for children with disabilities. The assistive devices available today for users or students with special needs are remarkable, yet expensive. To augment student needs for assistive devices, a \$50,000.00 grant was obtained from an out-of-state charitable organization. The telecommunication system is an example of how the campus environment will greatly enhance student achievement. The telecommunication system also has capabilities of voice, print data and video transmission with our outreach offices in Columbia, Charleston, Florence, Conway and Rock Hill. This capability, when realized, will hold tremendous value in bringing services to those individuals and families who are served across South Carolina. These projects are the key toward fulfilling the part of our mission to become a statewide resource for people with sensory disabilities, their families and the professionals who serve them.

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While the agency has succeeded this past year in developing and improving systems to enhance direct services to our clientele, the school's campus facilities have suffered for many years from extreme neglect and deferred maintenance. The school's leadership has recognized that attention must now be directed toward facility needs such as maintenance and transportation, both of which have become, unfortunately, an urgent and critical need - particularly for safety and accessibility.

In conclusion, the 1997-98 year held achievement in a number of areas. It was also a year of assessment, planning, reorganizing and consensus building.

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

The Mission of the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind is to provide quality comprehensive educational, vocational, and developmental services to individuals who are deaf, blind, or sensory multidisabled so that they may achieve their greatest potential of independence

and

to serve as a resource center providing leadership, information, and technical assistance to organizations and individuals concerned with services to people with sensory disabilities.

VISION STATEMENT OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

The vision for the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind is to be an internationally recognized model agency offering highest quality services to people who are sensory disabled, their families and the professionals who serve them.

SCSDB Fact Sheet

History

Founded in 1849 by a local minister, Reverend Newton Pinckney Walker

Began with an enrollment of five deaf students

Identified as the tenth U.S. residential school for children with sensory disabilities

Known for 150 years of service to deaf and blind individuals in South Carolina

Governance

Governed by an all-volunteer Board of Commissioners appointed by the Governor of South Carolina

Board includes representatives of each of the state's six Congressional districts, the deaf community, the blind community, the sensory multidisabled community and the state at large

Ex officio Board members include the State Superintendent of Education, the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Environmental Control and a representative of the Governor's office

Facilities

Located on the original founding site in Spartanburg County

Based on a campus of 160 acres with 38 buildings

In 1996 opened the Cleveland Learning Resource Center, with state-of-the-art instructional equipment and materials, funded through a private-public partnership

Known for Walker Hall, its signature building, which was placed on the national historic registry in 1977 and is being studied for major renovation and repair work

Shared with outside groups for community educational, social and athletic activities

Identified as the cultural, athletic and educational center for South Carolina's deaf and blind communities, including serving as the home of the South Carolina Museum of the Deaf and the future home of the State Museum for the Blind

Home to a myriad of educational and administrative programs

Operational center for statewide services to citizens of all ages with sensory disabilities

Staff

394 full-time staff members

Professional leaders who speak at conferences, teach classes and publish in educational journals

18% of the faculty and staff have advanced degrees in their fields, at the master's or doctorate level

Dedication to the students evidenced by the 50% of the staff who financially contributed to the Cleveland Learning Resource Center

Students and Clients

Offering services statewide to deaf, hard-of-hearing, blind and visually impaired individuals of all ages, their families and professionals who work with them

450 students from throughout the state served on the Spartanburg campus—preschool through post-secondary

Six buses transport day students Monday - Friday within the upstate. Dormitory students are bused home on Fridays and are returned on Sunday evening. Weekly routes include Myrtle Beach, Georgetown, Rock Hill, Anderson, Aiken and points between

Increasingly complex student population, with 100 students on campus using wheelchairs or other orthopedic devices for travel and 160 students on campus with identified chronic health problems, including seizures and Attention Deficit Disorder

65 percent of students are Medicaid eligible

Nearly 700 additional preschool children and their families served through Early Intervention Programs from the six regional SCSDB Resource Centers located throughout the state

More than 160 blind and visually impaired individuals across the state served by SCSDB Orientation & Mobility specialists

Statewide outreach services include interpreting, early intervention, Braille and sign language instruction, Braille/large print, audiological and low vision assessments, among many others

9,000 contacts made annually with students, clients, families and professionals

Programs

Provides services on the Spartanburg campus and at five other regional resource centers in Columbia, Charleston, Conway, Florence and Rock Hill

Hub of services in South Carolina for professionals and families in the field of sensory disabilities, including Braille services, Braille classes and sign language classes

Mainstreaming program with local public school districts allows students to benefit from specialized services and resources at SCSDB while taking some courses in the public schools

Recognized for its innovative services, such as summer leadership and arts camps for South Carolina students with sensory disabilities including public school students

Provides services to post-secondary students, through collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, South Carolina Commission for the Blind, Spartanburg Technical College and local businesses

Funding

90 percent of \$21 million budget provided by the State of South Carolina with the remainder provided through private contributions, federal grants and fees charged for many services

SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

Program Name: Educational Programs (Division of Programs for the Deaf, Division of Programs for the Blind, Division of Programs for the Multihandicapped, Division of Post Secondary Programs

Program Cost: \$7,086,266.01

School for the Deaf

Our educational programs in the School for the Deaf are tailor made to meet the varying needs of our students. Our students and teachers are encouraged to provide a total communication environment for students using every available means to communicate.

The Mainstreaming Program, established through a cooperative agreement with Spartanburg's School Districts 6 and 7, allows qualified students to attend several classes each day in the public schools. An SCsDB teacher or interpreter accompanies the students.

School for the Blind

Our teachers in the School for the Blind have specialized training in serving visually impaired and certification in their subject areas. Our classrooms and library are equipped with braille, talking and large print books, brailers, enlarging aids and instructional technology.

The Mainstreaming Program, developed in cooperation with Spartanburg's School District 7, enables SCsDB students to attend classes full or part time in one of the state's leading public school districts. Each student involved in the mainstreaming program utilizes a resource room staffed by SCsDB teachers throughout the day. Students may also take advantage of after-school programs at SCsDB.

School for the Multihandicapped

A lifestyle that is as independent as possible is our goal for every sensory multidisabled student. We begin by helping the student meet his basic needs of mobility, communication and nourishment. We gradually progress to helping develop skills that will enable the individual to hold a job and live with family or within a supervised environment. We keep abreast of technological developments, physical therapy techniques and teaching methods as we strive to improve the lives of those we serve.

Post-secondary Programs

Through post-secondary programs at SCsDB, sensory disabled adults are overcoming obstacles to education and employment. A number of partnerships with businesses and colleges make a wide variety of educational and occupational experiences possible. The four basic programs of study are:

Vocational Training
Industrial Skills Development Center
Cooperative Program with Spartanburg Technical College
Independent Living Skills Program

Program Goals: To provide a full range of educational, instructional and residential programs and services to meet the diverse needs of students with sensory disabilities. To develop positive, active parent involvement representative of all sectors of the student population.

To raise expectations and outcomes of students by increased academic/vocational levels, improved curricula development and higher placement standards (preschool through post-secondary).

Program Objectives:

- To develop and implement curricula for Deaf Middle School and Blind Middle School.
- To expand and implement special opportunities program curricula in School for the Multihandicapped.
- To computerize all student IEP's (Individualized Education Programs).
- To develop and implement core curricula for residential program.
- To develop vocational curricula and vocational competencies.
- To identify Transition Coordinators.
- To revise admission criteria and train admissions team.
- To invite parents to all student special events.
- To host a "Welcome Back to School" gala.
- To provide statewide regional parent meetings for parent input.
- To expand and improve SIC (School Improvement Committee) to include more representative sample of members (students, parents/families, and SCsDB staff).
- To ensure 60% of the student population in the School for the Multihandicapped attains a 70% annual achievement rate on Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals.
- To ensure 10% of graduates in the School for the Multihandicapped attain enrollment in Vocational Work Programs and/or Activity Centers.
- To ensure 80% of all students enrolled in the School for the Blind attain at least 70% of the goals and objectives identified in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- To increase statewide outreach services by 8.5% to students in public school programs who are blind or visually impaired (through orientation and mobility services, low vision training, consultation and assessments).
- To ensure 80% of graduates in the School for the Blind attain employment, training for employment or acceptance into post-secondary programs.
- The percentage of post-secondary students (undergraduate and post-secondary) who will either be employed or pursue further education after graduation will be at least 66%.

Performance Measures:

Outcomes:

In order to document improved student performance outcome and employability measures:

- Curricula developed and implemented for Deaf Middle School and Blind Middle School, raising academic performance standards and aligning with state-adopted textbooks.
- Initiated expansion of special opportunities program curricula in School for the Multihandicapped, uniquely designed for students who are multihandicapped and sensory disabled.
- IEP's computerized with new Horizons/Excent Program, making process of creation and evaluation of IEPs more efficient.
- Transition Coordinator identified in Deaf School and Multihandicapped School. Duties will be assigned to Behavior Specialist in Blind School when hired.
- Admission criteria revised. Training underway for admissions team in order to identify students who are most appropriately served by specific SCSDB programs.
- Parents invited to all student special events. Timelines for invitations still need to be improved for efficiency.
- 80% of the students in the School for the Multihandicapped attained at least a 70% annual achievement rate on IEP goals.
- 70% of graduates in the School for the Multihandicapped attained enrollment in Vocational Work Programs and/or Activity Centers.
- 87% of students enrolled in the School for the Blind attained at least 70% of the goals and objectives in IEPs.
- 100% of graduates in the School for the Blind attained employment, training for employment or acceptance into post-secondary programs.
- The percentage of post-secondary students (undergraduate and post-secondary) who were either employed or continued their education was 66%.

In order to improve access to specialized services by SCSDB Outreach programs:

- Outreach services for blind or visually impaired students in public schools across the state increased by 12%.

In order to encourage and foster increased parent/family involvement and improve relationships with parents/families:

- First regional parent meeting held in Rock Hill, with plans made for additional meetings in upcoming year.
- School Improvement Council expanded and under direction of agency Vice-President. Membership increased 43% and includes parents/families, students and staff members.

Program Name: Support Services and Outreach

Program Cost: \$5,952,602.00

Support Services and Programs

Through a variety of support services and programs, SCSDb determines and meets the unique needs of each individual client. Among others, these services include:

- Psychological Services
- Vocational Training
- Counseling Services
- Physical Education and Athletics
- Audiological Services
- Speech and Language Services
- Physical and Occupational Therapy Services

Outreach Services

As part of its commitment to serve South Carolina as a statewide resource center, SCSDb provides a number of services for sensory disabled individuals, their families, and the professionals who work with them. Among others, these services include:

- Early Intervention Services
- Sign Language Interpreter Services
- Orientation and Mobility for the Blind
- Itinerant Teacher Services for the Blind
- Braille/Large Print Services
- Diagnostic/Assessment Services
- Educational Workshops/Programs
- Summer Programs
- Captioned Films, Videos and other Informational Material Dissemination
- Outreach Centers in Charleston, Columbia, Conway, Florence, Spartanburg and Rock Hill

Program Goal: To provide comprehensive support/ancillary services to students, and statewide outreach services to individuals who are sensory disabled, their families and the professionals who work with them.

Program Objectives:

- Develop Medicaid contract of the provision of Orientation & Mobility services.
- Market outreach assessment services.
- Identify training needs of professionals, parents, consumers and members of the community throughout the state and increase training sessions by 10%.
- Establish committee to develop a plan for Pioneer Ridge program expansion.
- Explore various marketing strategies to advertise and attract students to SCSDb summer programs.

- Determine cost-effectiveness of using full-time staff with early intervention services.
- Increase the number of families served by the Early Intervention program by 10% over the previous year.
- Through the agency's statewide sign language training program, increase the number of community sign language classes by 25% over the previous year.
- Increase the number of eligible families receiving sign language in their home through the Early Intervention Program by 20% over the prior year.
- Increase the number of books (including print, Braille, cassette) housed in the Cleveland Learning Resource Center by 10%.
- The revenue generated through the rental of non-athletic facilities will increase by 50%.

Performance Measures:

Outcomes:

- Medicaid contract approved for O&M Services.
- New brochure developed and distributed to market outreach assessment services.
- The number of training workshops increased by 10% (FY 96/97: 25 workshops; FY 97/98: 28 workshops). 100% of workshops rated "Excellent" by participants.
- Reorganization completed with Department of Mental Health for a coordinator of clinical and treatment services for deaf/hard of hearing children (Pioneer Ridge program) and addition of contract psychiatric services.
- Agency Vice-President assumed leadership of summer programs. New marketing strategies identified in order to expand programs, number of participants and revenue generated.
- The number of families served by the Early Intervention Program increased by 12% (FY 96/97: 606 families; FY 97/98: 678 families).
- The number of sign language classes held statewide increased by 28% (FY 96/97: 33 classes; FY 97/98: 46 classes).
- The number of families receiving sign language in their homes through the Early Intervention Program increased by 24% (FY 96/97: 16 families; FY 97/98: 21 families).
- The number of books available in the CLRC increased by 32% (FY 96/97: 8,250; FY 97/98: 10,894).
- The revenue generated from the rental of non-athletic facilities increased by 164% (FY 96/97: \$1,330; FY 97/98: \$3,505).

Program Name: Division of Administrative Services

Program Cost: \$6,527,788.31

Program Goals: To contribute to the fulfillment of the agency mission as a resource of information and administrative support to all appropriate parties so as to maximize and account for utilization of resources, while safeguarding the integrity and assets of the agency.

To develop and implement an annual comprehensive staff development and training plan/schedule for all agency staff.

To ensure the development of a master plan for all facilities and property, while at the same time, managing short-term maintenance needs.

To ensure implementation of a master plan to provide state-of-the-art technology, while at the same time, managing short-term technology needs.

Program Objectives:

- To implement approved and/or amended comprehensive system of Personnel Development and the Supervisory/Management Training Plan.
- To train SCSDB staff as trainers.
- To develop and implement an individual training and development program.
- To develop an agency training and development master calendar of activities.
- To visit Clemson University master planning department and Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. Use information gathered to create Master Plan of campus facility and property needs.
- To assess, develop and recommend long-term Information Technology plan.
- To address short-term Information Technology needs to involve upgrading and replacing obsolete equipment.
- To develop and implement Intranet and Internet web pages for SCSDB.
- To implement Deaf Elementary School computer lab.
- To implement Vocational School computer lab.
- To train maintenance staff on installing telephone and data wiring throughout campus.
- To assess capability of staff to extract data from various SCSDB databases.

Performance Measures:

Outcomes:

- Implemented Personnel Development and the Supervisory/Management Training Plan. Staff members trained in CPR, First Aid, PART (Professional Assault Response Training), Exposure Control of Potentially Infectious Agents, Client & Crisis Management, Code of Conduct, Student Advocacy and other areas. 90% of all employees participated in a training session.
- New Employee Orientation scheduled monthly (32 participants in first year).
- 17 staff members trained as trainers.
- Funding did not permit development of master plan. Instead, a "To Do" list was created of campus facility and property needs.

In order to fully utilize technology in support of improved staff efficiency, student training and improved accountability/accuracy of business operations:

- Long-term Information Technology Plan completed.
- Short-term Information Technology needs addressed through continuous updating/repairs of obsolete equipment.
- Intranet page developed and implemented. Committee formed in conjunction with Information Technology and Public Information to develop internet web page to be completed this year.
- Private donations obtained to implement computer lab in Deaf Elementary School.
- Private donations obtained to implement computer lab in Vocational School.
- Training completed of maintenance staff for installing telephone and data wiring.
- Completed assessment of Business/Finance Department to extract data from various SCSDB databases. Computerized accounting system, SABAR, installed and utilized.

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